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## Protect Yourself and Children from Rabies

**San Bernardino.** Children are naturally curious and may not be afraid to investigate what appears to be a dead bat, or a wild animal that is nearby. Unfortunately, this could put them in danger of exposure to Rabies. "Please teach your children to respect wildlife, but keep a safe distance," urges Margaret Beed, M.D., Health Officer with the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health.

On May 13, 2008 a bat was found in the city of San Bernardino and tested positive for Rabies. If you believe your child has had any contact with a bat, or have questions about Rabies, call Public Health at **(909) 383-3050**.

Report dead, sick or nesting bats immediately to the San Bernardino County Animal Care and Control Program at **1 (800) 472-5609**. Do not pick-up or disturb an animal that appears to be dead or sick. Call the same telephone number to report any bite or scratch from a domestic or wild animal.

Protect your animals from Rabies and take advantage of the low-cost vaccinations offered by the Animal Care and Control Program. People can get Rabies from the bite of an infected animal, like a bat, raccoon, skunk, fox, or coyote. Rabies is a fatal disease, so it is important to get treated for a bite as soon as possible. If you do get bitten by an animal, or if saliva from a suspected rabid animal comes in contact with your eyes, nose, mouth or an open sore, wash the wound with soap and water for at least 5 minutes, and get immediate medical attention.

Animals with Rabies may act differently from healthy ones. Wild animals may move slowly or may act as if they are tame. A pet that is usually friendly may snap at you or may try to bite. Some signs of rabies in animals are:

- Changes in an animal's behavior
- General sickness

- Problems swallowing
- Increased drooling
- Aggression

Follow these simple tips to prevent Rabies from affecting your family and pets:

- **DO NOT touch, feed, harass or provide shelter for wildlife, or stray animals.**
- Vaccinate your pets against rabies.
- Do not let pets roam free to prevent the risk of exposure to rabies.
- Get pets spayed or neutered. They are less likely to leave home, become strays, and make more stray animals.
- Secure trash cans, and pet food and water, so they do not attract wild and stray animals.
- Bat-proof your home in the fall and winter.

For more information on preventing Rabies, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/rabies/> , or call the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health Disease Control Helpline at (909) 383-3050.

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